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AUTHOR Bell, T. H.
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ABSTRACT

The dynamics of today's society are causing substantial changes in traditional education norms and forms. The total learning opportunities, regardless of where they occur, should be promoted by the accrediting institutions. We must make sure that our requirements for quality performance, and our accreditation and other standard measures, encompass a much broader array of human experience. There is a place for external degrees based on competence demonstrated by examination schools without walls, and semi-professional, occupational, and vocational programs. Distinctions between formal and informal education are breaking down and education is expanding its horizons to be more in harmony with real life and the real world. These changes present a new dimension of measuring and awarding credit and degrees. At the same time that accrediting agencies are expanding their focus to include these new forms or education there must be careful review of questionable education standards to deter the federal government from acting as a regulatory agency. (JMF)

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DIMENSIONS FOR EFFECTIVENESS IN EDUCATION *

T. H. BELL

U.S. COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION

I AM HONORED TO HAVE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO ADDRESS UNDER ONE ROOF FOUR ASSOCIATIONS REPRESENTING SUCH A SIGNIFICANT SEGMENT OF AMERICA'S INSTITUTIONS OF SECONDARY AND POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION, ALONG WITH THE ACCREDITING COMMISSIONS WHICH FUNCTION AS INTEGRAL CONSTITUENTS OF THESE ASSOCIATIONS.

ALTHOUGH I HADN'T THOUGHT OF RENO AS BEING A MARRIAGE CENTER, I CAN'T HELP BUT NOTE THAT THE NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES AND THE WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES ARE NOT BEING COY ABOUT THEIR INTENT TO MERGE AND CREATE A NEW IDENTITY--THE WESTERN STATES ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES. SUCH A MERGER WOULD BE IN HARMONY WITH YOUR CONFERENCE THEME OF CREATING NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT IN EDUCATION, AND I COMMEND YOU FOR YOUR INTENTIONS.

AT THE SAME TIME, I NOTE WITH APPROVAL THAT THE WESTERN COLLEGE ASSOCIATION AND THE NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY AND JUNIOR COLLEGES, WHILE MAINTAINING THEIR INDEPENDENCE, ARE PARTICIPATING VOLUNTARILY IN THIS ANNUAL MEETING.

I RECITE THESE RELATIONSHIPS AND INTERCONNECTIONS BECAUSE I LOOK UPON THIS MEETING AS A SPLENDID EXAMPLE OF POSITIVE JOINT EFFORT TO IMPROVE AMERICAN EDUCATION. I HOPE THAT WHAT I AM ABOUT TO SAY WILL STRENGTHEN THE BONE AND MUSCLE OF OUR MUTUAL DESIRE TO ACHIEVE THIS GOAL.

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* PREPARED FOR JOINT ANNUAL MEETING OF THE NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES, NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY AND JUNIOR COLLEGES, WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES, AND WESTERN COLLEGE ASSOCIATION; RENO, NEVADA, DECEMBER 9, 1975, 9:00 A.M. PST (12:00 NOON EST).

FEW ENTERPRISES ARE MORE GUIDED BY TRADITION AND PAST PRACTICE THAN EDUCATION. THE LAW HAS ITS DOCTRINE OF STARE DECISIS, OR "THE DECISION TO STAND," WHICH IN EFFECT SAYS THE COURTS WILL BE GOVERNED BY PRECEDENT. EDUCATION HAS ITS INSTITUTIONALIZED PROCEDURES FOR ORGANIZING SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES TO PRODUCE A THING CALLED CREDIT. SO MUCH CREDIT QUALIFIES ONE FOR GRDUATION.

DOWN THROUGH THE YEARS WE HAVE BUILT UP VARIOUS METHODS OF MEASURING THE QUALITY AND QUANTITY OF EDUCATION.

TO MEASURE QUALITY, WE USE ACCREDITATION STANDARDS, STANDARDIZED ACHIEVEMENT TESTS, MERIT SCHOLARSHIP EXAMINATIONS, ENTRANCE EXAMINATIONS, GRADUATE RECORD EXAMINATIONS, SCHOLARLY PAPERS, AND RESEARCH ACCOMPLISHMENTS. WE MAKE EVALUATIONS BASED ON THE NUMBER OF BOOKS ON THE SHELVES OF A SCHOOL'S OR COLLEGE'S LIBRARY, ON THE EQUIPMENT IN SCIENCE LABORATORIES, ON STUDENT-TEACHER RATIOS, AND ON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT.

OUR QUANTITATIVE MEASUREMENTS ARE USUALLY IN CREDITS, CARNEGIE UNITS, OR SEMESTER OR QUARTER HOURS. WE MAY ALSO THINK IN TERMS OF HOURS SPENT IN A CLASSROOM, LABORATORY, OR LECTURE HALL.

AT A NUMBER OF POINTS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE STANDARDS BECOMES BLURRED. HOW DO YOU CLASSIFY HOURS SPENT IN A CLASSROOM, LABORATORY, OR LECTURE HALL? HOW DO YOU CLASSIFY REQUIREMENTS THAT STUDENTS PASS EXAMINATIONS AND TESTS PREPARED BY TEACHERS AND PROFESSORS? AND REQUIREMENTS THAT THE FACULTY PUBLISH?

EVEN WHEN WE GET THROUGH APPLYING ALL THESE CRITERIA WE MUST ASK OURSELVES WHETHER OUR MEASUREMENTS GET TO THE HEART OF EFFECTIVENESS IN EDUCATION--AND ARE MEASURING THIS EFFECTIVENESS EFFECTIVELY. I DON'T THINK WE ARE HITTING THE TARGET. THE TIME HAS ARRIVED TO ENLARGE OUR PERSPECTIVE AS TO WHAT ULTIMATELY SHOULD CONSTITUTE CREDIT, DEGREE, AND DIPLOMA QUALIFICATIONS

WE MUST PROMOTE TOTAL LEARNING OPPORTUNITY REGARDLESS OF WHERE IT OCCURS. WE MUST MAKE SURE THAT OUR REQUIREMENTS FOR QUALITY PERFORMANCE, AND OUR ACCREDITATION AND OTHER STANDARD MEASURES, ENCOMPASS A MUCH BROADER ARRAY OF HUMAN EXPERIENCE. THE MISSING DIMENSION LIES IN WHAT THE SYSTEM IGNORES AND EXCLUDES AND IN WHAT OUR SCHOOLS, COLLEGES, AND UNIVERSITIES FAIL TO ENCOURAGE AND FOSTER.

THE DYNAMICS OF TODAY'S SOCIETY ARE CAUSING SUBSTANTIAL CHANGES IN TRADITIONAL EDUCATION NORMS AND FORMS. LOOK AT THE GREAT EMPHASIS BEING PLACED ON SEMI-PROFESSIONAL, OCCUPATIONAL, AND VOCATIONAL PROGRAMS. DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN FORMAL AND INFORMAL EDUCATION ARE BREAKING DOWN. EXTERNAL DEGREES ARE BEING CONFERRED AT LEAST IN PART ON THE BASIS OF COMPETENCE DEMONSTRATED BY EXAMINATION. SCHOOLS WITHOUT WALLS ARE ALREADY FAIRLY NUMEROUS. THE LIST OF CHANGES IS LONG AND SIGNIFICANT. THE CHANGES ARE BEING MADE IN AN EFFORT TO BETTER SERVE SOCIETY, AND IT BEHOOVES INSTITUTIONS OF EDUCATION AND ACCREDITING AGENCIES TO CHANGE AND ADJUST TO NEWLY EMERGING SOCIETAL NEEDS.

THE BIG CHALLENGE, OF COURSE, IS TO DO THIS WITHOUT SACRIFICING QUALITY -- TO MAKE SURE THAT STANDARDS BECOME HIGHER AND THAT WE DO NOT CHEAPEN THE CREDITS AND DEGREES AWARDED.

BY MAKING THESE CHANGES AND ADJUSTMENTS, THE HOUSE OF EDUCATION WILL EXPAND ITS HORIZONS AND BE MORE IN HARMONY WITH REAL LIFE AND THE REAL WORLD. THIS NEW DIMENSION OF MEASURING AND AWARDING CREDIT WILL ENGAGE STUDENTS, HOMES, PARENTS, BUSINESS MEN AND WOMEN, MANUFACTURERS, AND PRACTICING PROFESSIONALS. ALL MUST BE SWEPT INTO AND BECOME ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS IN THE EDUCATION ARENA.

THIS CAN AND SHOULD BE DONE WITHIN THE EDUCATION AND OTHER STRUCTURES THAT EXIST TODAY. EVERY ACCREDITED EDUCATION INSTITUTION CAN AND SHOULD BECOME MORE CLOSELY INVOLVED WITH OUR ECONOMY AND OUR PRODUCING SOCIETY, AND WITH REAL LIFE AND EVERYDAY LIVING.

EVERY EDUCATION INSTITUTION SHOULD BE REACHING OVER AND BEYOND PURE ACADEMIC LEARNING. EDUCATION AND CREDIT FOR EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT SHOULD, AS I SEE IT, RECOGNIZE LEARNING AND INTELLECTUAL ATTAINMENT THAT TAKES PLACE OUTSIDE THE FORMAL ACADEMIC STRUCTURE. BUT WE MUST GUARD AGAINST UNREAL AND SUB-STANDARD MEASURES IN MAKING DECISIONS.

I AM NOT SUGGESTING THAT WE MAKE VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS OUT OF OUR LIBERAL ARTS COLLEGES ANY MORE THAN I WOULD PROPOSE THAT WE MAKE LIBERAL ARTS SCHOOLS OUT OF OUR MANY EXCELLENT VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL SCHOOLS. THEY COMPLEMENT EACH OTHER AND, AS WITH OUR HEART AND BRAIN, WE COULDN'T EXIST WITHOUT EITHER.

THE POINT I WOULD DRIVE HOME IS THAT WE MUST STOP THINKING OF SOME ASPECTS OF EDUCATION AS BEING SO LOFTY AS TO BE ABOVE AND BEYOND WORK. WORK IS A BIG PART OF LIFE. IT ENABLES US TO ENJOY PHYSICAL FREEDOM AND INDEPENDENCE WHILE THE LIBERAL ARTS AND HUMANITIES FREE AND ENRICH THE HUMAN SPIRIT. DENY MAN EITHER, AND I DOUBT HE CAN LEAD A MEANINGFUL, FULFILLED LIFE.

BECAUSE WORK <u>IS</u> SUCH A BIG PART OF LIFE, WE NEED MUCH MORE VIABLE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN EDUCATION AND ALL THE WORK THAT PEOPLE DO IN AMERICA. OUR SOCIETY CANNOT AFFORD TO OVER-CONCENTRATE IN ANY ONE AREA OF EDUCATION. WE MUST ENCOURAGE EVERYONE TO DEVELOP TO THE MAXIMUM HIS OR HER ABILITY TO LIVE A SELF FULFILLING LIFE AND TO MAKE A LIVING.

TO ATTAIN THIS GOAL, SCHOOLS, COLLEGES, AND STUDENTS SHOULD ENGAGE IN AND SPONSOR EXPERIENCES THAT TEACH MATURITY AND INSIGHT INTO THE INNERMOST OPERATIONS AND PROBLEMS OF OUR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ORDER. METHODS SHOULD BE DEVISED TO MEASURE SUCH EXPERIENCES, AND CREDIT SHOULD BE OFFERED FOR THEM. IF A STUDENT FAILS TO DEMONSTRATE A REASONABLE AMOUNT OF SUCH PRACTICAL KNOWLEDGE, AND IF A SCHOOL OR COLLEGE FAILS TO SPONSOR SUCH EXPERIENCE, BOTH GRADUATION FOR THE STUDENT AND ACCREDITATION FOR THE INSTITUTION MIGHT WELL

SUCH OUTREACH PERFORMANCE WOULD ADD A VITAL DIMENSION TO A STUDENT'S POTENTIAL FOR BECOMING A POSITIVE PARTICIPANT IN OUR NATION'S COMPLEX SOCIO-ECONOMIC SYSTEM. IT REQUIRES AS A BARE MINIMUM THAT THE HOUSE OF EDUCATION BUILD CLOSER TIES WITH THE HOUSES OF BUSINESS, INDUSTRY, AND GOVERNMENT. EVERY SECONDARY SCHOOL AND COLLEGE PROGRAM SHOULD INCLUDE A COMBINATION OF WORK AND STUDY. FACULTY MEMBERS AS WELL AS STUDENTS NEED TIGHTER AND MORE MEANINGFUL BONDS WITH PRACTICING PROFESSIONALS AND FIRST-HAND EXPERIENCE WITH THE PRODUCING, MARKETING, DISTRIBUTING, SELLING, AND SERVICING ENDEAVORS OF OUR VAST FREE ENTERPRISE SYSTEM.

SOME EXPERIENCE SHOULD BE IN THE FORM OF VOLUNTARY, UNPAID, MEANINGFUL PUBLIC SERVICE. IT MIGHT BE USEFUL TO EDUCATION AND TO OUR NATION IF SUCH SERVICE CARRIED CREDIT AND WAS A MANDATORY REQUIREMENT FOR GRADUATION. IF AN INSTITUTION WERE TO CARRY OUT EACH YEAR AT LEAST ONE PUBLIC SERVICE ENDEAVOR THAT FOCUSES UPON A CRITICAL NEED, I WOULD SEE THREE IMMEDIATE BENEFITS:

FIRST, THE INSTITUTION ITSELF WOULD BECOME COMMITTED TO IMPROVEMENT OF THE COMMUNITY.

SECOND, STUDENTS AND FACULTY MEMBERS WOULD GAIN RESPECT FROM, AND IDENTITY WITH, THE COMMUNITY THEY SERVE.

THIRD, STUDENTS WOULD LEARN HOW TO IDENTIFY, FORMULATE, AND EXECUTE ACTION NEEDED TO IMPROVE LIFE AND LIVING CONDITIONS IN THE COMMUNITY.

THE ACCREDITING ASSOCIATIONS AND AGENCIES, WHICH PLAY SUCH A DELICATE, COMPLEX, AND VITAL ROLE IN AMERICA'S UNIQUE EDUCATION SYSTEM, BY THEIR VERY NATURE WILL PLAY A PROMINENT ROLE IN THE FORMULATION AND ADVANCEMENT OF THIS NEW DIMENSION OF OUTREACH.

A FEW YEARS AGO THE NATIONAL COMMISSION ON ACCREDITING GATHERED STATEMENTS FROM 45 ACCREDITING AGENCIES REGARDING THEIR FUNCTIONS. MOST OFTEN CITED BY THE AGENCIES WERE THE FOLLOWING:

IMPROVING EDUCATION.

STIMULATING IMPROVEMENT IN PROGRAMS AND IN INSTITUTIONS.

IMPROVING STANDARDS.

ASSURING ADEQUATE EDUCATIONAL PREPARATION OF PRACTITIONERS, AND--

IDENTIFYING ACCEPTABLE INSTITUTIONS AND PROGRAMS OF STUDY.

TO ME, THIS LIST OF FUNCTIONS PUTS ACCREDITING AGENCIES SQUARELY IN THE MIDDLE OF THE MOVE TO EXPAND THE DIMENSIONS OF EDUCATION.

EVERY DAY YOUR EVALUATION PANELS ADDRESS THE QUESTION THAT FACES ALL EDUCATORS AND EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS, WHICH IS, WHAT IS GOOD EDUCATION? YOU ENCOURAGE STEADY IMPROVEMENT OF EDUCATION IN THE INTEREST OF THE EDUCATION CONSUMER. YOUR JUDGMENTS SHAPE ATTITUDES AMONG ADMINISTRATORS, TEACHERS, AND SCHOLARS. APPROPRIATE ACTION, OR INACTION, ON YOUR PART WILL STIMULATE AND FACILITATE--OR INHIBIT--THE GROWTH OF THE NEW DIMENSION OF EFFECTIVENESS I HAVE BEEN DISCUSSING.

AS WE PRAISE THE VIRTUES OF RELATING EDUCATION MORE DIRECTLY WITH BUSINESS, INDUSTRY, AND THE COMMUNITY, AND WITH LABOR AND GOVERNMENT, IT IS IMPORTANT THAT WE NEVER LOSE COGNIZANCE OF THE <u>FUNDAMENTAL</u> MISSION OF EDUCATION IN OUR SOCIETY.

EDUCATION MUST, FIRST OF ALL, BE DEEPLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE MINDS OF THE PEOPLE SERVED BY THE SCHOOLS, COLLEGES, AND UNIVERSITIES OF THE NATION. EVERYTHING BEGINS IN THE MINDS OF PEOPLE. AND EDUCATION MUST ALWAYS INSIST ON STANDARDS THAT WILL DISCIPLINE, DEEPEN, BROADEN, AND SHAPE THE MINDS OF OUR YOUTH. ON THE COLLEGE CAMPUS THIS IS THE FUNCTION OF THE LIBERAL ARTS CURRICULUM.

BEFORE WE TEACH OUR FUTURE ENGINEERS, LAWYERS, TEACHERS, PHYSICIANS, AND SKILLED TECHNICIANS TO MASTER THE SPECIFIC REQUISITES FOR SUCCESS IN THEIR CHOSEN WORK, WE MUST DISCIPLINE AND REFINE THEIR MINDS THROUGH THE CHALLENGE THAT COMES FROM MASTERY OF THE LIBERAL ARTS. FROM THIS MASTERY OUR STUDENTS WILL GAIN THE CAPACITY TO THINK CRITICALLY AND TO KEEP ON LEARNING THROUGH THE YEARS.

WE MUST DO MUCH MORE TO KEEP EDUCATION IN TOUCH WITH LIFE'S ONGOING PROBLEMS AND PURSUIT OF PROGRESS. WE MUST PREPARE OUR STUDENTS FOR MEANINGFUL WORK AND PLACE THEM IN USEFUL JOBS AFTER GRADUATION. BUT IN THIS WE MUST KEEP OUR COMMITMENT TO DEVELOPING SENSITIVE, RATIONAL, KNOWLEDGEABLE, AND CREATIVE PEOPLE. AND WE CAN DO THIS ONLY THROUGH HIGH QUALITY SCHOLARSHIP THAT WILL LIBERALIZE AND REFINE THE INTELLECT. FOR THIS REASON, WE MUST ALWAYS HAVE A STRONG LIBERAL ARTS PROGRAM AS THE HEART AND SOUL OF THE CURRICULUM.

BEFORE I CLOSE I WANT TO SHARE WITH YOU A TROUBLESOME CONCERN THAT I HAVE IN DISCHARGING MY DUTIES AS THE U. S. COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION.

AS MOST OF YOU KNOW, THE LAW REQUIRES ME TO APPROVE ACCREDITING ASSOCIATIONS LIKE YOURS IN ORDER FOR YOUR MEMBER INSTITUTIONS TO PARTICIPATE IN FEDERAL PROGRAMS. THIS REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF YOUR STANDARDS ARE ESTABLISHED IN THE LAW IN ORDER TO PROTECT STUDENTS FROM SUBSTANDARD EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES AND FROM UNSCRUPULOUS OPERATORS. THE END IS LAUDABLE. IT IS THE MEANS THAT TROUBLES ME.

AS WE RUN INTO MORE INSTANCES OF FRAUD AND QUESTIONABLE EDUCATION STANDARDS, THERE IS AN OUTCRY IN CONGRESS AND IN THE PRESS FOR THE U. S. OFFICE OF EDUCATION TO PLUG THE LOOPHOLES THAT GIVE ACCESS TO FEDERAL STUDENT AID PROGRAMS TO SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES OF QUESTIONABLE WORTH.

WE ARE MOVING STEADILY TOWARD USING THE PROCESS OF ACCREDITATION FOR PURPOSES OF REGULATORY ACTION AND CONSUMER PROTECTION. ACCREDITATION AS A POLICE ACTION AND AS COMPLIANCE ENFORCEMENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN FEDERAL PROGRAMS COULD WELL LEAD TO FEDERAL REGULATION OF ACCREDITING ASSOCIATIONS.

AS ONE WHO HAS SPENT ALL HIS ADULT YEARS IN EDUCATION, I AM TROUBLED BY THE TREND TO REGULATE MORE AND MORE. EDUCATION THAT IS GOVERNED BY A FAT RULE-BOOK LEADS TO MANY PROBLEMS THAT I AM SURE ARE OBVIOUS TO YOU.

I DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER TO THIS PROBLEM. I DO KNOW THAT THE MORE LAWS ARE VIOLATED, AND THE MORE STUDENTS ARE "RIPPED OFF" BY SHADY PRACTICES, THE MORE USOE WILL BE PUSHED INTO THE ROLE OF POLICEMAN FOR AMERICAN EDUCATION.

IF WE ARE TO BLOCK THIS TREND, WE NEED STRONG, INDEPENDENT ACCREDITING ASSOCIATIONS COMMITTED TO HIGH STANDARDS. THE MORE THE EDUCATION PROFESSION CAN GOVERN ITSELF AND EXPEL UNWORTHY PRACTITIONERS, THE LESS GOVERNMENT INTERFERENCE WILL BE NEEDED. THAT IS WHY I EXPRESS MY RESPECT AND ADMIRATION FOR YOUR ORGANIZATIONS. IF YOUR COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE WERE ONLY NATION-WIDE, SHARED BY ALL ELEMENTS OF OUR SOCIETY, OUR PROBLEMS WOULD BE SMALL INDEED.

EXPERIENCE AND TRADITION HAVE BROUGHT THIS NATION'S EDUCATION SYSTEM TO WHERE IT IS TODAY. IT IS A SYSTEM THAT HAS PRODUCED MILLIONS OF CITIZENS REASONABLY WELL PREPARED TO LIVE A USEFUL, PRODUCTIVE, AND RESPONSIBLE LIFE.

ANY CRITIC CAN FIND HOLES IN IT, BUT WE CANNOT BE OBLIVIOUS TO THE POLITICAL, SOCIAL, AND ECONOMIC FERMENT THAT ENVELOPES AMERICA AS SHE BEGINS HER 200TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION.

I LIKE THE WAY THIS PARTICULAR TIME IN AMERICAN HISTORY HAS BEEN DESCRIBED BY PROFESSOR GEORGE CABOT LODGE OF THE HARVARD SCHOOL OF BUSINESS. HE SAYS:

> THE UNITED STATES IS IN THE MIDST OF ONE OF THE GREAT TRANSFORMATIONS OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION. WHAT IS HAPPENING IS THAT THE OLD IDEAS AND ASSUMPTIONS WHICH ONCE MADE OUR GREAT INSTITUTIONS LEGITIMATE, AUTHORITATIVE, AND CONFIDENT ARE FAST ERODING. THEY ARE SLIPPING AWAY IN THE FACE OF A CHANGING REALITY AND ARE BEING REPLACED BY DIFFERENT IDEAS AND DIFFERENT ASSUMPTIONS WHICH ARE AS YET ILL-FORMED, CONTRADICTORY, AND SHOCKING. THIS TRANSITION IS NEITHER GOOD NOR BAD. THERE IS THE POSSIBILITY OF PLENTY OF BOTH. THE POINT IS SIMPLY THAT IT IS TAKING PLACE.

I AGREE WITH PROFESSOR LODGE, AND I WOULD ADD THAT THE INCREASING INTENSITY OF THE WINDS OF CHANGE OFFERS EDUCATORS, THEIR INSTITUTIONS, AND THEIR ACCREDITING AGENCIES THE GREATEST CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES THEY HAVE EVER FACED.

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